Schooling in Guinea

Findings from the GDHS-II 1999

Summary Report

This report summarizes the education data from the second Guinea Demographic Health Survey (GDHS-II) conducted between May and July 1999. It consists of the analysis of education data routinely collected in DHS surveys as well as additional data collected from an education module, which was integrated into the GDHS-II and the Service Availability Questionnaire (SAQ). This module, and the corresponding education questions in the SAQ, constitute ORC Macro's first experience collecting extensive education data. The sample includes 5,090 households, 1,980 men (aged 15-59) and 6,753 women of child bearing age (15-49), and 7,929 children aged 6-15. Specifically, these data provide insight regarding the household demand for schooling through an examination of children's school participation, school costs, and parents' perceptions of schooling. The SAQ data provide additional information on the access to and availability of schooling and community knowledge of and attitudes toward education. These data aim to provide users of the data, in particular those working in education in Guinea, a useful tool for program planning and evaluation of education policy.

The Direction Nationale de la Statistique conducted the GDHS-II in 1999. Financial assistance for the survey was provided by USAID/Guinea, with additional support from UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank. The design of the education module was supported by USAID's Global Bureau/Human Capacity Development Center (G/HCD) and Africa Bureau/Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD). This education report was generated under a new USAID activity, DHS EdData, with the support of USAID/Guinea, G/HCD, and AFR/SD, and the technical assistance of the MEASURE *DHS*+ program of ORC Macro. Critical support for data analysis and report writing was also provided by the Ministère de l'Enseignement Pré-Universitaire et de l'Éducation Civique and by Research Triangle Institute, implementor of the multi-donor-supported activity, the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels Activity.

For more information about the Guinea Education Report 1999, please contact:

Ministère de l'Enseignement Pré-Universitaire
et de l'Éducation Civique
Service Statistiques et Planification
B.P. 2201, Conakry, Guinée
Téléphone: (224) 45 47 08
Fax: (224) 41 34 41
E-mail: sspmepu@mirinet.net.gn

For more information about the GDHS-II 1999, the MEASURE *DHS*+ program, or the DHS EdData activity, please contact:

ORC Macro
11785 Beltsville Drive
Calverton, MD 20705, USA
Telephone: 301-572-0200
Fax: 301-572-0999
E-mail: reports@macroint.com
Internet: http://www.macroint.com/dhs
http://www.dhseddata.com

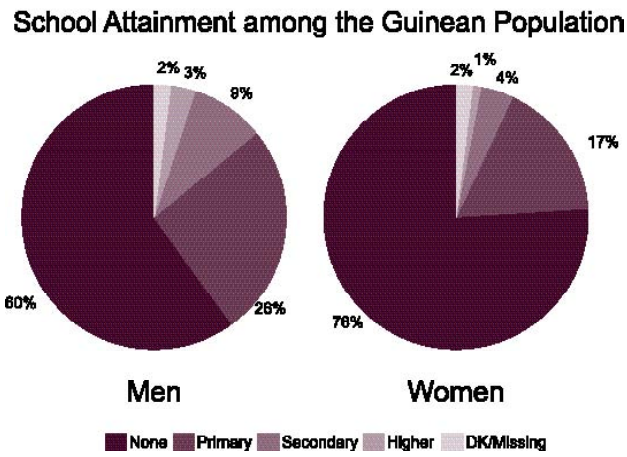
Cover photo: N.F.Q.E.

GUINEA 1999
EDUCATION REPORT

KEY FINDINGS

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

Overall, the level of education of the Guinean population is low. Only 24 percent of females and 38 percent of males have ever attended school. However, educational participation is increasing over time. For those age 65 and older, 93 percent of males and 96 percent of females have no education. Comparatively, for those age 10-14, 42 percent of males and 52 percent of females have no education. Clearly, these gains in education are occurring more slowly for females than for males. In addition to the disparities between females and males, disparities are also seen in terms of region, area of residence, and wealth. Men and women in rural areas are more likely than those in urban areas never to have attended school. Specifically, those from Conakry have a substantial advantage in education compared to those from other regions. Finally, those from wealthier families are more likely to have attended school than those from poorer families.




Plan Guinée

The net attendance ratio is 24 percent for boys and 12 percent for girls in the lowest wealth quintile compared to 83 percent for boys and 72 percent for girls in the highest wealth quintile.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

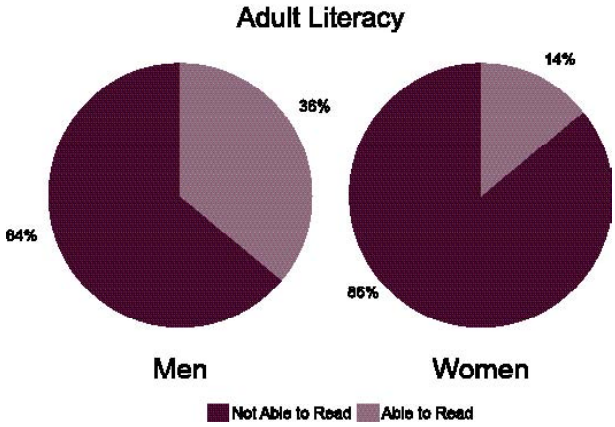
In 1989, the Declaration of Education Policy set a gross enrollment ratio goal of 53 percent by 2000. This goal has been attained and surpassed. The gross attendance ratio for primary school is 61 percent and the gross attendance ratio for secondary school is 19 percent.[1] The net attendance ratio is substantially lower with a ratio of 40 percent at the primary level and 13 percent at the secondary level. Thus, there is a large proportion of over- and underage children in primary school. Disparities in school attendance by gender, residence, region, mother's education, and wealth exist. For boys, the net attendance ratio is 46 percent, whereas for girls it is 33 percent. The net attendance ratio is 24 percent for boys and 12 percent for girls in the lowest wealth quintile compared to 83 percent for boys and 72 percent for girls in the highest wealth quintile. Gender parity is highest for those who live in Conakry, who are in the highest wealth quintile, and those whose mothers have some education.

Only 14 percent of children enter school at the official age of seven. Urban children, children from Conakry, children from the highest wealth quintile, and children with educated mothers are most likely to start school at the official age. There is no gender difference in the net intake ratio; however, the gross intake ratio shows that boys are enrolling in greater proportions than girls (gross intake ratio of 51 percent compared to 40 percent, respectively).[2] The gross intake ratio is lower than the 70 percent objective set by the Declaration of Education Policy.

[1] The gross attendance ratios produced by the GDHS-II are proxies for enrollment ratios. The net attendance ratio (NAR) for primary school is the percentage of the primary school age population (7-12 years) that is attending primary school. By definition, the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent. The gross attendance ratio (GAR) for primary school is the total number of students attending primary school—regardless of age—expressed as a percentage of the official primary school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage or underage students and high levels of participation, the GAR can exceed 100 percent.

ADULT LITERACY

Similar to the findings on education, low proportions of men (36 percent) and women (14 percent) are literate. The likelihood of knowing how to read increases from older generations to younger generations; however the proportion of women who are illiterate still remains extremely high in comparison to men. Five percent of men age 55-59, 23 percent of men age 45-49, and 51 percent of men age 15-19 can read. For women, 8 percent of women age 45-49 and 23 percent of women age 15-19 can read. The urban-rural difference is equally dramatic. Sixty percent of urban men can read compared to 22 percent of rural men, whereas 33 percent of urban women can read compared to only 4 percent of rural women.

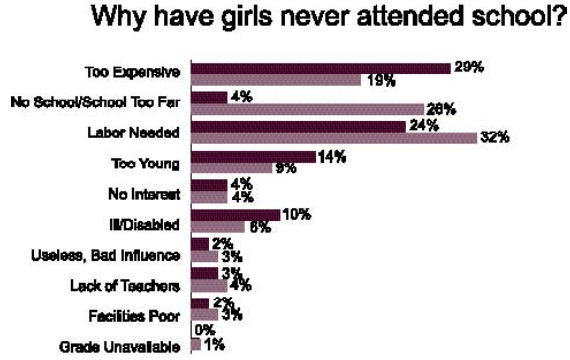


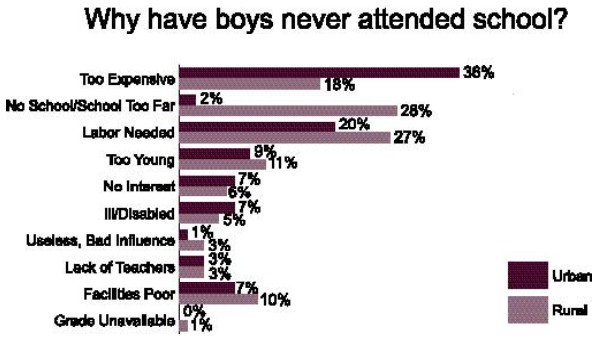
EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING

Data were collected on why children have never attended school, why they start school overage, and when and why they drop out of school. This information provides insight into the intrahousehold education decision-making process.

Reasons Children Have Never Attended School[3]

Mothers of children who had never attended school were asked why their children have never attended school. The main reasons for children never having attended school are presented below by urban-rural residence and gender. Many gender differences are minor, with the exception of the need for the child's labor (more likely to be a factor in girls never having attended school), and the poor quality of the school facilities (more likely to be given as a reason for boys never having attended school). By con-



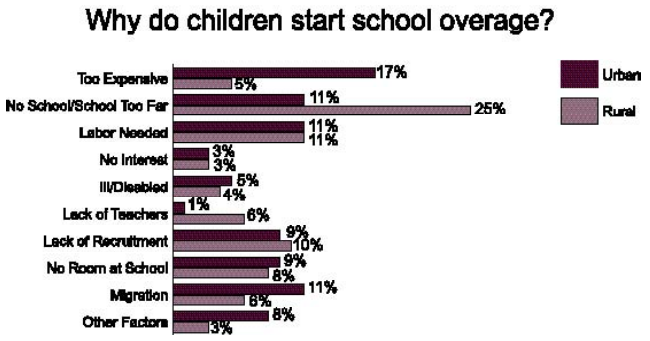


trast, the urban-rural differences are greater: For both boys and girls in urban areas the monetary cost of schooling was cited as a reason for their never having attended school (36 and 29 percent, respectively), compared with only 18 and 19 percent of boys and girls in rural areas. Even more strikingly, having no nearby school was given as a reason that 28 percent of boys and 26 percent of girls in rural areas have never attended school, compared with only 2 percent and 4 percent of urban boys and girls.

[2]The net intake ratio is the percentage of children of the official starting age (7 years) attending grade 1 for the first time. The gross intake ratio is the total number of students attending grade 1 for the first time—regardless of age—expressed as a percentage of the official starting age population (7-year-olds).

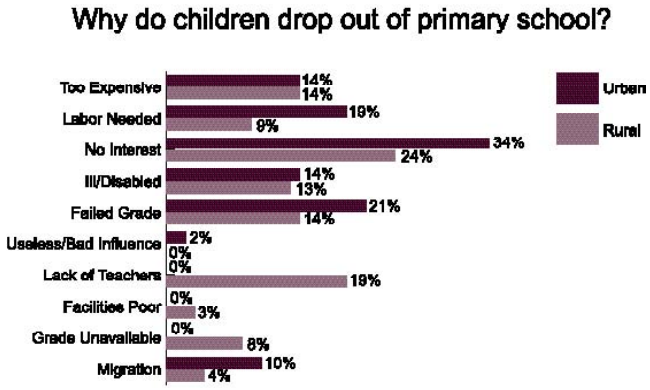
[3] More than one response to the question was possible.

Reasons Children Start School Overage

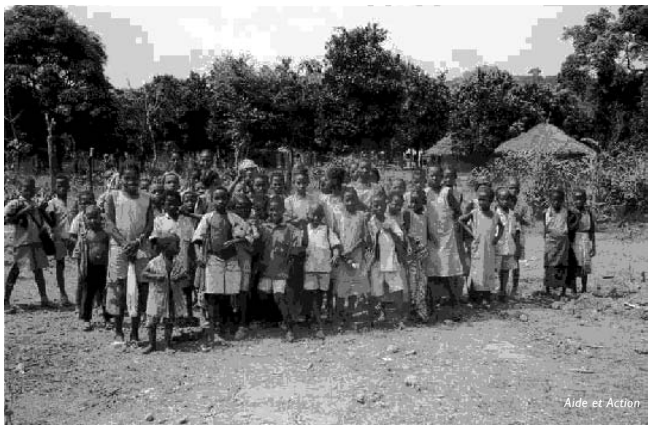


The differences in net and gross attendance ratios as well as the differences in the net and gross intake ratios show that a significant proportion of students start school overage. Mothers of children who started school overage were asked the primary reason their children started overage. Similar to the reasons children have never attended school, the primary reasons mothers gave for students starting overage were inadequate access to schooling (20 percent), need for the child's labor (11 percent), and the expense of schooling (10 percent). Not having access to school was cited more often for rural students than for urban students (25 percent compared to 11 percent). For urban students, the cost of schooling was often given as the reason for late enrollment (17 percent compared to 5 percent for rural students). Lack of student recruitment and lack of room at the school were also given as reasons for starting overage in both urban and rural areas.

Leaving School[4]



On average, children drop out of school at age 12. Mothers of children who dropped out of school were asked why their children had dropped out. In both urban and rural areas, lack of interest in schooling was the reason most often given for leaving school (34 and 24 percent, respectively). Lack of interest was given as an explanation for boys leaving school twice as often as for girls. Failure, on the other hand, was the most common reason given for girls dropping out of school (23 percent). In rural areas, lack of teachers was cited as a significant reason for leaving school (19 percent). As with reasons for never attending school and for starting school overage, need for child's labor was cited more often as a reason for leaving school in urban areas (19 percent) than in rural areas (9 percent).



Cost of Schooling

Often little is known about the amount of money households spend on costs associated with schooling. These costs can be prohibitive for many households and burdensome for others, discouraging households from enrolling children in school.

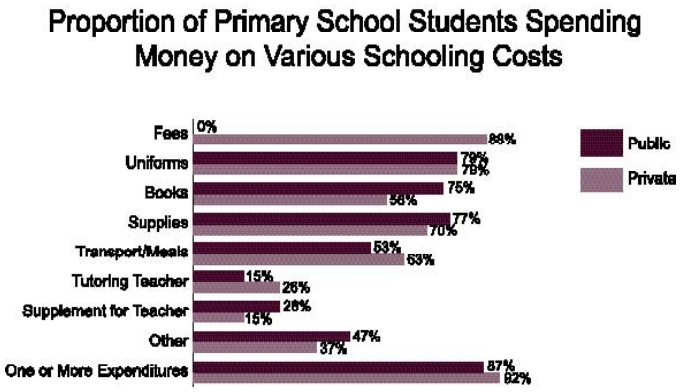
Expenditures on and Contributions to Schooling

The vast majority of students' households spend money on schooling, regardless of the student's gender, residence, region, or type of school attended. Expenditures, apart from school fees, are similar between students in public and private schools. Private school students are slightly more likely than public school students to spend money on one or more types of expenditures. On average, households whose children attend private schools pay nearly two and a half times as much for schooling as do households whose children attend public schools. Most of the difference in total expenditures is due to school fees: households with children in private school pay an average of 92,181 Guinean francs (GF) in school fees. When school fees are subtracted from the total expenditure, there is minimal difference in the costs to public and private students.[5] Strikingly, more is spent on boys than on girls in nearly every category of expenditure—both public and private— and especially on school fees. As expected, expenditures on schooling are much higher in urban areas than rural areas.

[4] More than one response to the question was possible.

[5] No data were collected on school fees paid within the public system, as there are no official public school fees.

In terms of the different school expenses, the majority of students, both public and private, spend money on uniforms, books, and supplies. Interestingly, students in public schools are more likely to spend money on books than are students in private schools; however, private school students pay more for books than public school students. A high proportion of both private and public school students pay for supplies, yet urban private school students spend significantly more than rural private school students on supplies. Although the proportion of students paying for transport and meals is lower than the proportion paying other expenses, the amount spent on transport and meals is second only to that spent on school fees. Private school students are more likely to pay for tutoring, whereas public school students are more likely to pay supplements to teachers.



Regarding these expenses, 36 percent of mothers report that all expenses are difficult to pay. Uniforms are the most difficult expense to pay according to 14 percent of urban women and 23 percent of rural women. Money for teachers was more difficult for urban women than rural women to pay. Very few women said that none of the expenses was difficult to pay.

Community Support to Schools

Rural households are more likely than urban households to make contributions to schools (27 percent compared to 13 percent). This finding is supported by the Service Availability Questionnaire data, which show that 81 percent of rural and 65 percent of urban households are located in communities that provide support to local schools. Giving money to teachers is the sole exception to this urban-rural differential: 70 percent of rural households compared to 85 percent of urban households give money to teachers. Conakry has the highest percentage of households giving money to teachers (92 percent). In general, it is more common for households to contribute to teachers than to schools (100 versus 22 percent).

Parent-Teacher Association

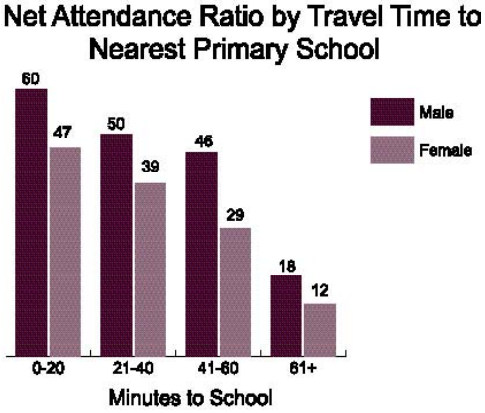
Nearly half (43 percent) of women report that they do not know if there is a parent-teacher association (PTA) at the local school or the school their children attend. Thirty five percent of women report that there is a PTA. The community perception is that the PTA, rather than citizens' associations, religious groups, nongovernmental organizations, or the community as a whole, is responsible for providing support in both urban and rural schools.

Access to School

The data on access to school provide information on the accessibility of schooling in terms of time, distance, and school grades offered. Access to schooling is a significant barrier for many rural children.

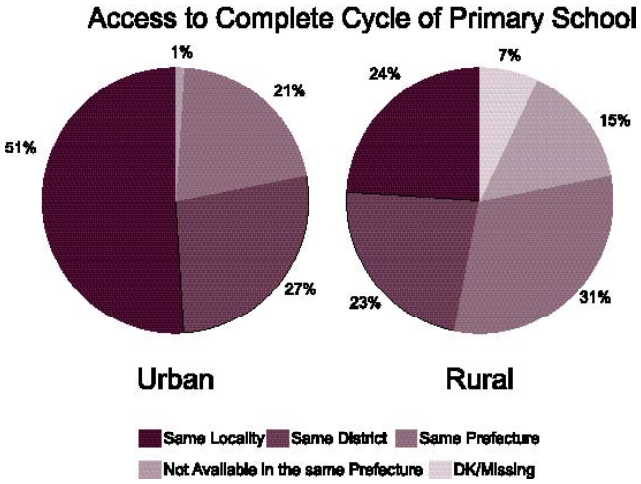
Travel Time to School

Average travel time to school is much lower in urban areas than rural areas; the average estimated travel time to the nearest school is 19 minutes in urban areas and 47 minutes in rural areas. The lowest travel time to the nearest school is seen in Conakry with an average of 15 minutes. Primary net attendance decreases markedly as travel time to school increases. Thus, the distance to school disproportionately affects rural children's school participation.



Distance from and Access to Primary Schools

Similar to the findings on estimated travel time to the nearest school, the average estimated distance to the closest school is over four times greater in rural areas than urban areas. Access to a complete cycle of primary school is also much more common in urban areas than rural areas. Fifty-one percent of urban households have access to a complete cycle of primary school in the same locality in comparison to 24 percent of rural households.[6] Similarly, 15 percent of rural households do not have access to a school with all six grades of primary compared to only 1 percent of urban households.



School Characteristics

The community questionnaire collected data on the characteristics of the closest school to the community. In this discussion "schools" refers to the schools closest to the communities surveyed and not to all urban and rural schools in Guinea. Additionally, these data are analyzed and presented at the household level to accurately represent the nation as a whole. In most regions, the closest school to the community is a public school; however, in Conakry, there is a higher proportion of the closest schools being private (34 percent). Having multiple-grade classrooms in the closest school to the community is more common in rural areas than urban areas (25 percent compared to 16 percent, respectively). Windows and desks are common amenities in both urban and rural schools, but electricity is far more common in the urban schools (34 percent) than the rural schools (1 percent). Conakry fares the best in this regard with slightly over half of the schools closest to the community having electricity. Access to water at the closest school is also much more common in urban areas than rural areas (71 percent compared to 29 percent respectively). Access to sanitation facilities in schools closest to the community differs by residence: in rural communities, there are no toilets in over half of the closest schools compared to 18 percent in urban communities. Finally, classrooms are perceived as overcrowded most often in Forest Guinea and least often in Lower Guinea.

Perceptions of Children's School Participation

Perceptions regarding school participation of boys and girls reflect the actual state of education in Guinea: the majority of households believe that boys enroll in greater numbers. Community informants were asked what measures would increase children's enrollment rates. Interestingly, the measures for improving enrollment do not differ by gender, except for public awareness campaigns which are cited as a measure that should be taken for girls more often than for boys (40 versus 27 percent). Contrary to the findings on reasons for never attending school and for leaving school, reducing the costs of schooling is cited more often as a measure for improving enrollment in rural areas than in urban areas. In line with the findings on access to complete cycle of primary school, improving access is cited as a more effective measure for improving enrollment in urban areas than in rural areas.

Community informants were also asked why girls do not complete primary school. Marriage is over-

[6] *A locality is a subdivision of a district and a district is a subdivision of a prefecture.*

whelmingly seen as the main reason girls do not finish primary school (46 percent). The next most common reasons parallel those given for leaving school: academic failure and lack of interest (17 percent each). Again, cost is seen as a larger barrier to schooling in urban areas than in rural areas (21 percent versus 5 percent) and access is seen as a greater impediment to schooling in rural areas than in urban areas (11 percent versus 0 percent).

CONCLUSIONS

The GDHS-II provides household-, child-, and community- level education data. The major objective of the education questions in the GDHS-II is to provide policymakers and program administrators with detailed information on the state of education, the household demand for schooling, and the community perceptions of schooling. This information will assist in furthering education goals, identifying problem areas, and planning and implementing strategies to improve existing programs.

Overall, educational attainment and participation have improved over time, but these improvements disproportionately favor males, urban residents and the affluent. These improvements are most evident in ever-attended-school and literacy indicators, as well as the current net and gross attendance ratios.

In Guinea, there are significant and persistent gender and urban-rural differences in schooling attainment and participation. Men are far more likely than women ever to have attended school and to be literate. Despite overall increases in school attainment and literacy, from older to younger cohorts, the absolute gender gap increases for school attainment and only slightly decreases for literacy. The urban-rural school attainment and literacy gaps are equally dismaying; urban residents, particularly those who live in Conakry, are far more likely to have attended school and to be literate than rural residents.

Among school-age children, similar differences persist. Many school-age children still do not attend school. Only 46 percent of boys and 33 percent of girls age 7-12 attend primary school; these figures differ considerably by urban-rural residence, wealth, and mother's education. In particular, greater wealth and having an educated mother are associated with higher attendance ratios and a reduced gender gap in school attendance. The gross attendance ratios show that many of those who do attend school are overage for their grade, which places them at increased risk of dropping out before completing primary school. Similarly, there is a trend toward overage first-time school enrollment, as indicated by the fact that of the new entrants to grade 1, only 14 percent are the official starting age of 7.

The reasons mothers gave for their children never having attended school, for overage first-time enrollment, and for dropout point to problems with both the supply of education and the demand for education. To varying degrees, the distance to the nearest primary school, a shortage of teachers, the lack of room at schools, and the lack of student recruitment contribute to children never attending school, enrolling overage, and dropping out of school. On the demand side, the costs of schooling—both monetary and non-monetary—negatively affect children's enrollment and persistence. Households and communities contribute significant resources to schooling, and many households are unable to pay at least some of the costs of schooling for their children. Another demand-side factor, in some cases, is children's lack of interest in schooling. Many of these factors are interrelated, and combine to keep children's participation in schooling extremely low.

This study suggests areas of emphasis for public policy and government investment in schooling aimed at removing the obstacles to school attendance, timely enrollment, and school persistence. Substantial gains have been made in education; however, alarming disparities in education exist according to gender, area of residence, and socioeconomic status. The education decision-making data provide more detail on the reasoning behind the education decisions made for children. In particular, these data underscore the importance of accessible and affordable schooling in increasing schooling participation.

Education is both a public and private enterprise, with a decisive influence on the social and economic development of individuals and of nations. Because educating girls and women provides benefits that are social, individual, and intergenerational, increasing the educational attainment of the female population is of critical importance to Guinea. The effort to improve children's school participation and persistence and hence, adults' literacy and schooling attainment, however, must take note of disparities not only by gender, but also by urban-rural residence and household wealth.